

Hiram Herald

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*Blending the Best of the
Past, Present and Future*

Responsiveness, Reliability Crucial for Leadership

Citizens of Hiram:

Having been Mayor since March 2012, I have been very fortunate to learn a lot about my roles and responsibilities as your public servant. Even though my professional careers over the years provided me with a good foundation for holding public office, including a strong work ethic, core values and a customer-service mindset, nothing can really prepare one for taking on the role as the chief elected official of a municipality. Looking back, I think the two primary character traits that have been most beneficial to me in my role as your Mayor are responsiveness and reliability.

Being responsive is critical for elected officials or anyone serving the public or customers, no matter what the issue or concern is. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Caring begins with listening and having empathy. I pride myself on listening to concerns expressed by citizens and re-

sponding to those concerns even when, more often than not, the response may not address the problem or the problem requires more time and resources that are not always available.

Yet even when the answer is not what the citizen was seeking, one thing has remained constant and very refreshing: The citizens have appreciated my level of response and providing a sincere and concerted effort to assist him or her to the extent possible. This leads to a trust and a greater degree of reliability earned.

Most dictionaries would define reliability as possessing the ability to be relied or depended upon for accuracy, honesty or achievement. I always want the citizens to know that they can depend on me to provide them with the type of leadership they expect and deserve while knowing they can rely on me to pursue a vision that is in



the best interest of everyone.

Further, the citizens can rely on me to represent them on the various boards I serve on as part of my mayoral duties as well as at area functions, events, activities and intergovernmental relations to ensure Hiram remains relevant in all matters.

These two traits, responsiveness and reliability, do not always mean that the answer or solution is a popular one. Sometimes it can be hard to see the forest for all the trees. There are many decisions your Council and I have to make that may appear to have an adverse effect in the short term. And maybe some do. But the overall goal is to make Hiram a better place than where we found it while doing so at a limited expense to our citizens.

Please feel free to contact me or come to our City Council meetings so you can be an engaged citizen and help us serve you better. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your Mayor for the great City of Hiram.

—Mayor Doris Ann Devey

Sewer, Streetscape Projects Will Improve Downtown

Road closure signs, Nixle alerts and uneven pavement might create the impression that downtown Hiram businesses aren't operational during current installation of sewer lines, but all businesses are and will remain open.

The project to provide downtown sanitary service necessary for that area of Hiram to thrive went into full swing this summer and continues until the end of November. City officials are asking that all residents, business owners and commuters exercise patience and pardon the progress as crews install sewer lines to and from our new lift station.

The primary roadway affected is Main Street from Arnold Lane to the northeast and Highway 92 to the southwest. This project will also continue through South Forty subdivision along South Forty Pass east and west. There have been and will continue to be intermittent road closures and delays as the sewer and water lines are being installed.

Main Street has experienced some disruption, as might be imagined. A lot of pavement is uneven and the temporary gravel creates dust that has turned to mud during heavy rain episodes. The conditions have impacted thru-traffic.

But, again, businesses will be open during their normal busi-



ness hours unless the owners post otherwise. The areas where sewer lines have been installed and covered with gravel are being capped with concrete until the final milling and paving takes place at the end of the project.

The City Council additionally approved a streetscape project July 7. With signed contracts and imminent notice to proceed, streetscape work will begin soon and be finished next February.

The streetscape not only entails sidewalks, streetlights and new pavement, it also includes needed water lines from Highway 92 to Arnold Lane along Main Street. There will also be

improvements to the intersection of Main Street, North Avenue and Powder Springs Street which includes a turn lane on Main Street to North Avenue and Powder Springs Street.

"We understand that our residents, businesses and visitors have experienced some untimely and frustrating inconveniences, including some water and gas line breaks, associated with these improvements," said City Manager Robbie Rokovitz. "The contractors and staff are doing and will continue to do everything within reason to ensure the temporary effects of this project are negligible to our Hiram family."

City Council Rolls Millage Rate Back to Zero Again

By City Manager Robbie Rokovitz

For as long as most can recall, Hiram has not imposed property taxes on citizens within incorporated City limits, and that is true again for the new fiscal year.



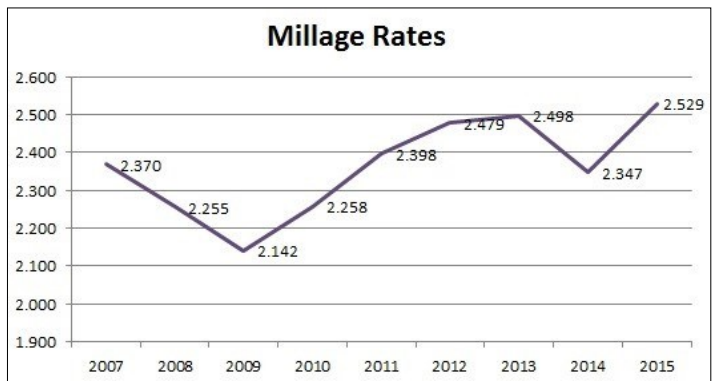
This does not mean that property owners do not pay property taxes – they do. These taxes, however, are assessed and collected by the County government for its services provided to those who live in Paulding County. These taxes collected are the same within the unincorporated areas, as well as within the three incorporated municipalities – Dallas, Hiram and Braswell.

The millage rate for Paulding County has been set at 6.528, providing about \$1,527,803 to the County from Hiram property owners. There is also a fire millage rate of 3.10 (\$725,519 in tax revenue from Hiram residents), School millage of 18.879 (\$4,418,410 in tax revenue) and State millage of 0.200 (\$46,808 in tax revenue). The City of Hiram does not receive any of this revenue from its property-owners for services.

Even though the City of Hiram has historically rolled its millage rate back to zero, which the Mayor and City Council are doing again this tax year, the millage rate still must be computed and submitted to the Georgia Department of Revenue.

The computation of this millage rate takes into account a myriad of criteria, with the primary category being the net tax digest (total value of all taxable property within a jurisdiction) after exemptions. The adjusted net digest for property within the City of Hiram for this tax year is \$234,038,375, which is \$10,283 more than last year. The millage rate for the 2014 tax year was set at 2.347 mills but was rolled back to zero, yielding no City property tax obligation to incorporated Hiram property owners.

Because the tax digest went up this year, meaning property values have improved, Hiram's millage rate has been calculated to be 2.376. This millage rate would equate to a revenue-neutral rate if the Hiram City Council imposed it. However, this millage rate is being rolled back to zero again this year, thereby saving property owners an estimated \$560,000 in property taxes not



collected.

So what does this mean to Hiram residents?

This means that the City of Hiram will continue to provide services to its citizens using General Fund operation revenues without the largest source of revenues used by most municipalities.

This fiscal year, which runs from July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, includes projected General Fund revenues of \$2,935,146 with expenditures anticipated to be \$3,449,553. The difference this fiscal year is \$514,407.

Without the largest source of revenue generated by the property tax digest, the City must rely on other sources of revenue to reach a balanced budget. The top 10 sources of revenue that help fund operations include a Local Option Sales Tax (19%), Municipal Court fines (15%), franchise taxes (13%), beer and wine tax (9%), probation revenue (9%), insurance premium tax (6%), title ad valorem taxes (6%), alcoholic beverage licenses (4%), occupation taxes (3%) and financial instruction taxes (2%). The remaining shortfall is addressed using interfund transfers from the Hotel/Motel Funds, budgeted fund balance (prior surpluses) and an undesignated Money Market fund. So be sure to visit all of our local businesses and patronize them often.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 770-743-3726, ext.. 2016, or www.cityofhiramga.gov if you have any questions about Hiram's finances and budget.

Ga. DOT Changing Speed Limits On U.S. 278, Other Places Here

Motorists should be aware that the Georgia Department of Transportation has changed speed limits on several roadways within Hiram, including U.S. 278, also known as State Route 6 and Jimmy Lee Smith Parkway.

The majority of U.S. 278 from the eastern city limits will be 45 mph, changing to 55 mph about a quarter mile west of Business 6. So those entering Hiram from the west will need to reduce speed from 55 to 45 mph within a mile of coming into the

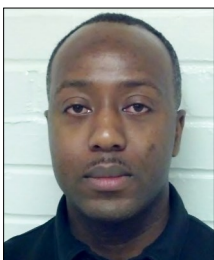
city limits near Palisades Parkway. The speed limit is also 45 mph from Paris Road to Bobo Road on Business 6.

On Highway 92, the speed limit is 45 mph from the northern city limit north of Nebo Road to just south of State Route 120 and from Seaboard Avenue to the southern city limit 0.29 mile south of U.S. 278. The limit is 40 mph from 0.20 mile south of State Route 120 to Seaboard Avenue.

The Ga. DOT has also amended speed

limits on five city streets: 50 mph on Nebo Road from Highway 92 to Dallas Nebo Road (4.91 miles); 30 mph on Arnold Lane from Main Street to 0.14 mile south of Paris Circle; and 25 mph on Main Street from Powder Springs Street to Arnold Road, Oak Street from Highway 92 to Seaboard Avenue, and Seaboard Avenue from Powder Springs Street to Seaboard Avenue.

The speed limit changes are in effect when the DOT has installed new signage.



City Hires 2 New Police Officers

Hiram's two newest police officers are Jessie Gantt, left, and Jared McLaughlin, right. Gantt is a native of Greenwood, S.C., who moved to Douglasville three years ago. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army. McLaughlin, the son of Gina Robinson and Thomas McLaughlin, is a resident of Dallas who joined the Hiram Police Department "to help serve and protect the community I grew up in." Gantt became an officer "to try to make a positive change in my community."



Hiram Calendar

Sept. 7 - Labor Day; City Hall closed

Sept. 14-16 - Qualifying for City Council Post 3 Special Election

Sept. 29 - City Council work session

Oct. 2 - Shepherd's Rest Ministries Candlelight Vigil

Oct. 6 - City Council regular session

Oct 12-30 - Early voting for General Election

Oct. 26-30 - Advance voting for General Election

Oct. 27 - City Council work session

Nov. 3 - Municipal General Election/Special Election

Nov. 10 - City Council regular session

Nov. 26-27 - Thanksgiving holiday; City Hall closed

Dec. 24-25 - Christmas holiday; City Hall closed

Municipal Court arraignments

Oct. 1, Nov. 5, Dec. 3

Municipal Court trials

Sept. 14, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 14

Senior Citizen Time Reserved at Events Place

The Events Place is open to seniors on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This block of time is reserved for seniors only who are also City of Hiram (incorporated) residents.

Details about this service and venue availability are at 770-943-3726, ext. 2001.

Hiram Hosts Movie Nights in the Park

The City of Hiram is providing the public with a free movie night in the park each of the next three months.

The movies at Ben Hill Strickland Memorial Park amphitheater will begin at 8 p.m., and families are welcome to bring chairs and blankets. Food trucks and vendors will sell to moviegoers, and there will be activities for children.

The Sept. 18 movie, "When the Game Stands Tall," involves football, and "Strange Magic" Oct. 30 reflects a Halloween theme. "The Greatest Turkey Movie of All Time" showing Nov. 20 will get the audience in the spirit for Thanksgiving.

All three movies are family-friendly. Parking will be available within the park on both the Oak Street and Alexander Street sides.



FRIDAY NIGHT FLICKS!

Friday, September 18th

Show Time — 8:00pm

... Featuring...



What's Better than Fall and Football!

Join Us for "Movie Night" on the Big Screen @ Ben Hill Strickland Sr. Memorial Park.
Bring your Chairs and Blankets and Enjoy a Great Family Movie in Our Outdoor Amphitheatre.



Public Input Welcome as Hiram City Council Considers Changing Occupation Tax Format

The Mayor and City Council are considering another method of calculating occupation taxes as the 2016 Occupation Tax Certificate renewal season approaches.

Currently, Hiram's occupation tax is determined by the number of employees at each business location, but State law allows other methods for calculating the tax rate, including a flat fee, gross receipts, and profitability.

The Mayor and Council are considering a method using a combination of gross

receipts and profitability.

The first Public Hearing about the possible change was September 1 at 6:30 p.m., and the second Public Hearing is set for October 6 at 6:30 p.m. The Mayor and Council could make a decision on this Oc-

cupation Tax change at their October 6 meeting.

Public input is welcome at the public hearings or through written comments. Immediate questions can be directed to Melissa Chosewood or Cynthia Geyer at 770-943-3726.

This is an official publication of the City of Hiram, funded by the City's Hotel/Motel Tax



Doris Devey, Mayor
Kathy Bookout, Post 2, Mayor Pro Tem
Prather "Pep" Rollins, Post 1
Teresa Philyaw, Post 3
Derrick Battle, Post 4
Kathy Carter, Post 5
Robbie Rokovitz, City Manager

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City Council, Downtown Entities Partner to Create Haunted House

For the first time, the Hiram City Council is partnering with local downtown business and property owners to offer a Haunted House venue.

The City Council recently approved the use of its property on the southeast side of Railroad Street downtown for the Haunted House. The effort to create the attraction at 52 Railroad St. East is being led by downtown property owner Buddy Harrelson and Joey McCollough, a downtown business proprietor.

The Haunted House will consist of a maze of cargo containers equipped with animatronics and occupied by actors portraying frightening characters and environments. Entertainment Design Group created

the same kind of haunted house called "Containment" at Atlantic Station in downtown Atlanta.

While some details are still being worked out, parking will be available on site as well as in and around the downtown area when space is available and not needed for other business purposes.

The Haunted House opens September 25 and will thrill visitors through November 7 with admission \$20. Hours are 7 p.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays and 7-11 p.m. October 4-8, 11, 13-15, 18-22, 25-29 and November 1 and 6-7.

McCollough has details about Containment at 770-241-5064 or hramhorror@gmail.com.

Renovated Strickland Park Playground Ready for Play

Face-to-Face Design Allows Child & Adult To Interact on Swing

Hiram children – and adults as well! – are already enjoying the new playground equipment the City Council has provided at Ben Hill Strickland Sr. Memorial Park next to the tennis courts.

The playground is functionally complete, but amenities that include benches and picnic tables are being added.

One of the more exciting amenities the City has purchased is an Expression Swing, a GameTime exclusive and the industry's first playground swing that promotes intergenerational play as adults and children swing together. The patented face-to-face design shown in the photo at right features a bucket seat for children under 5 and a comfortable adult swing seat that allows a parent and child (or a grandparent and grandchild) to interact with each other and experience one another's facial expressions while at play.

Adults and their children using the playground should be aware that the plastic and other materials on the equipment can generate temperatures that cause discomfort, especially when bare skin is exposed to the slides on a hot summer day. If the ambient temperatures outside are in the 90s and above for several days, the slides and other play areas can be very hot to the touch. Parents and guardians should test the play equipment with the back of the hand to make sure the surfaces are not too uncomfortable.



EMAIL ALERTS FOR HIRAM HERALD! Editions of the Hiram Herald newsletter are available online quarterly at www.cityofhiramga.gov. Visit the website and subscribe to the newsletter and other newsworthy information to stay informed about your City. Publication dates are early March, June, September and December.

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